

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commissioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

I comment on Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. The FCC should be promoting its own goals of fair competition, diversity and local voice in today's media market. It is doing the opposite.

I strongly believe that the FCC should strengthen all of the media ownership rules that guarantee more not less diversity. Such rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of the huge, dominant and rich corporations in the broadcast industry.

Deregulation in Connecticut means that I can hear a right-wing radio talk show host from Texas on one channel after another at many times during the day. It means that the variety of music I am able to hear on the radio is limited to whatever the media moguls decide. It means that the daily newspaper, in every major city in my state, is owned by one huge interest in some other state. It means that national news is filtered through a very limited number of editors and local news is limited by largely the same editorial policies throughout the state. It means that there is no thoughtful debate about national policies unless a national administration official or congressman happens to offer a challenge to the country's direction. It means that the spectrum of opinion presented is exceedingly narrow.

The right to conduct an informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was renewed in the marketplace of diverse ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge and consolidate further, our ability to have an open, informed discussion from a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

I urge the FCC to preserve the public interest by passing rules that diversify not monopolize our media.

Also, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February of 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to hold similar hearings in all parts of the country, including Connecticut, and solicit the widest possible participation from the public. The rarified, lawyerly atmosphere of an FCC rulemaking is not an appropriate decision-making venue when questions as profound as the freedom of our media are at stake. I encourage the Commissioners to come out and meet some of the people who do not have a financial interest in this issue, but a social interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is important that the Commission take the time to review these issues more

thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Sincerely,
Henry S. Lowendorf